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Monument to Civil War surgeon raises question why he was buried near Navarino

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By



David Lassman / The Post-Standard

Jerry Orton, a member of Sons of Union Veterans and a Civil War reenactor visits the grave of Civil War surgeon Milton Fellows MD who died in 1863. He's buried in this family plot at Pine Ridge Cemetery in Navarino.

Jerry Orton and his wife, Lorraine, have discovered an interesting mystery at Pine Ridge Cemetery, along U.S. 20, east of the hamlet of Navarino.

It's the monument for Milton A. Fellows, M.D., a soldier from the Civil War who died in 1863.

Why was the physician, who was only 24 when he died of "camp fever," buried at Navarino? He might have come from southern Onondaga County? His parents are listed on the burial shaft as Hiram and Sarah Fellows.

Jerry Orton, of Camillus, is a Civil War buff. He explains how he found the marker:

"We have driven by the cemetery many times. Then, on January 1, we drove in and found this beautiful memorial to a young assistant surgeon. Your guess is as good as mine (as to why he's there)."

Both of us did a bit of research on Fellows. My helper Pam Priest, archivist at the Onondaga Historical Association, said the archives didn't have a file on the physician, but she found his obituary in the Syracuse Journal of Jan. 1, 1863:

"On Tuesday last, Surgeon M.A. Fellows died at Elmira, where he recently arrived from the army, sick of camp fever. He formerly resided at Elmira and the Advertiser of that place speaks of him and his professional ability in the highest terms.





Provided photo

Memorial to Civil War surgeon Milton A. Fellows in the Pine Ridge Cemetery, along U.S. 20, east of the hamlet of Navarino.

“He came to reside near this city over a year ago and last fall entered the army as a surgeon. He was taken sick immediately after the battle at Fredericksburg. His remains were brought here for interment.”

Pam also found a listing for Fellows in the 1859/60 Syracuse Directory: “Fellows, Milton A. (Hoyt and Fellows), physician and chemist, 2 Convention Hall, 39 Grape.”

There was a full-page advertisement for the physicians in the directory, too: “Dr. H. Hoyt has associated with him, in the practice of his profession, Dr. M.A. Fellows, of Ottawa, C.W., a

young man of rare professional talents and of correct moral principles.”

Was Fellows from Canada? He joined the 101st New York State volunteers, known as the 2nd Onondaga County Regiment and the Union Brigade, according to research by Jerry Orton. Jerry found that the physician enrolled in Washington to serve three years and was mustered out at the end of 1862. He was commissioned an assistant surgeon from October 1862.

This looks like a job for a Civil War researcher.

Rain barrels

Westcott Community Center, 826 Euclid Ave., will hold rain barrel workshops next Sunday, at 12:15. 1:15. 2:15 and 3:15 p.m. Space for the classes is limited; RSVP by contacting Amy Samuels at 443-1757.

This is part of the county’s “Save the Rain” project. Syracuse residents get a free rain barrel by attending the workshops.

GM Reunion

Alumni of General Motor’s Fisher Body plant on GM Circle will hold a reunion Thursday, June 7, at Hinerwadel’s in North Syracuse. The event is sponsored by United Auto Workers Local 854. For more information and tickets contact retirees president, Ray Bedell at 288-4562.

The reunion runs from noon until 4 p.m. The plant closed 19 years ago.

Downtown history

A while ago I wrote about Jim Hyla's observation about marking downtown buildings, with historical background. Dennis Connors, curator of history at the Onondaga Historical Association, responded to both of us:

"The Downtown Committee has published a book with self-guided walking tours of downtown, including descriptions of several historical buildings.

"The historical association is working with different entities to create a GPS-activated device for smart phones that will allow people to access interpretive information on downtown buildings from their cell phone.

"OHA also is working with the city to install a series of interpretive signs along the recently-opened Onondaga Creekwalk, between downtown and the lakefront. On occasion, we are able to access small grants from a local foundation which will underwrite the classical historical marker that we all are familiar with for roadside placement. We currently have one in the works to mark the location of the 1841 gunpowder explosion on Willow Street.

"Signs are expensive. The gunpowder sign will cost close to \$1,000, funded through the foundation."

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